Santa Cruz County Democratic Party Endorsement Questionnaire for the Primary Election 2024

Must be completed and submitted no later than December 1, 2023 at 5 PM.
Santa Cruz County Democrats, PO Box 7763, Santa Cruz, 95061,
or by email: endorsements@cruzdcc.groups.io

The Santa Cruz County Democratic Central Committee will be considering endorsing eligible Democrats who have qualified to appear on the ballot in the Primary Election on March 5, 2024 for both contested and uncontested positions. In order to be eligible, a candidate must be a registered Democrat for at least three months prior to the final filing date for that candidate's race in this election. An endorsement by us automatically carries an endorsement by the California Democratic Party.

All eligible candidates who wish to be considered for endorsement are invited to complete our Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire and **return a copy** electronically **(1)** via Google Forms, **or (2)** by email to endorsements@cruzdcc.groups.io no later than December 1, 2023 at 5 PM, **or (3)** by USPS Mail postmarked no later than November 27th, to arrive by December 1, 2023 to Santa Cruz County Democratic Central Committee, PO Box 7763, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. Due to recently implemented USPS delays, we encourage an electronic reply.

Thank you for submitting your questionnaire. We look forward to hearing from you at our Endorsement Forum on **December 13, 2023 at 7 PM** at LOCATION TBD

Questions: Please email us at endorsements@cruzdcc.groups.io

Email *

martinez4supervisor@gmail.com

Candidate Name *

Monica Martinez

Candidate Phone Number *

831.334.9190

Candidate Email *

monicamartinezsc@gmail.com

Preferred Mailing Address *

PO Box 836, Felton, CA 95018

Preferred Phone Number *

831.222.0525

Name of Campaign Committee and FPPC *

Monica Martinez for Supervisor 2024, FPPC #1459021

Campaign Website *

www.MartinezForSupervisor.com

Social Media *

@MonicaForSupervisor, #MonicaForSupervisor

Candidate headshot for future use should candidate be endorsed

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What are the approximate years you have been registered as Democrat in Santa Cruz County? *

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Have you been registered in another county? If so, in what county were you registered and how long were you registered?

Yes (Los Angeles, Sacramento and San Luis Obispo counties), in total: 7 years

Describe your involvement with the Democratic Party in the local, state, or national level over the past few years. *

I have been a registered Democrat since the mid 2000s. Locally, I am a member of the Democratic Club of North Santa Cruz County, and I am the representative for that club to the Democratic Central Committee. I am also an elected ADEM Delegate for AD28, representing a labor slate. I have attended the last two CADEM conventions, and I regularly participate in DCC events, including parades, fundraisers and tabling events.

Over the years I have been an regular donor and volunteer on numerous democratic candidate campaigns. While my professional role in the nonprofit sector can limit my political advocacy at times, my profession has also allowed me to play a hands on role in advancing democratic values and human rights on a daily basis.

List the 10 organizational or personal endorsements of your candidacy that you consider to be the most important or most representative of your campaign (Please separate each endorsement with a semicolon). *

Former Assemblymember and 5th District Supervisor Mark Stone; Santa Cruz Mayor Fred Keeley; Scotts Valley Mayor Jack Dilles; Santa Cruz YIMBY; Pajaro Valley Cesar Chavez Democratic Club; Equality California; Monterey Bay Central Labor Council; Monterey/Santa Cruz Building and Construction Trades Council; Planned Parenthood Advocates Mar Monte; Scotts Valley Diversity, Equality, Inclusion, and Allyship Group

(Please note, I am very humbled and honored to have received endorsements from numerous other organizations and individuals who align with my values and vision for our community, a complete list of endorsements can be found on my website)

Briefly describe the aspects of your background and experiences that indicate your qualifications for the office you seek. *

I am a lifelong public servant with a strong commitment to advancing social and economic justice for working families. Growing up in Bakersfield, my roots in agriculture and the influence of my parents – both active in their unions, my father as a fire captain for Kern County Fire Dept. and my mother as an elementary school teacher – instilled in me a passion for serving others. My educational journey led me to earn a B.A. in Political Science from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and a Masters in Public Administration from the University of Southern California.

From the outset of my career, my focus has been on public service. I started by dedicating several years to serving women experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles' Skid Row, and later moved to Santa Cruz to take on the role of Executive Director at Housing Matters. During my tenure at Housing Matters, I was proud to pioneer the Housing First approach, and I spearheaded a highly successful community initiative that resulted in housing 180 of the most medically vulnerable individuals experiencing homelessness in less than two years.

For the past nine years, I have had the privilege of serving as the CEO at Encompass Community Services, the largest health and human services nonprofit in Santa Cruz County. My responsibilities include the management of a $35 million annual budget, primarily composed of federal, state, and county contracts and grants. Additionally, I oversee a dedicated workforce of 400 individuals who provide essential behavioral health services, early childhood development programs, and housing initiatives tailored to support low-income families. I take immense pride in my journey as a public servant and the transformative impact my work has had on the lives of countless individuals and families. My unwavering dedication to promoting social welfare and advocating for those in need continues to drive my passion for public service.

I'm running for Santa Cruz County 5th District Supervisor because I want to ensure that all of us have the resources to build a resilient, thriving community. The 5th District is my home. It's where I'm raising my family, and where, like many others, I've lived through the immense challenges of the last few years, including the COVID-19 pandemic, a devastating fire, and the 2022-23 winter storms, which resulted in immense damage. I will be a strong voice for the 5th District to accelerate recovery, strengthen resilience, and represent all voices.

What are the top five major issues facing this office? (Please label each one and briefly describe. Separate each with a semicolon). *

Disaster recovery: In the 5th District, disaster recovery is arguably the most important issue. The Santa Cruz Mountains have been hit hard over the last three years between the pandemic, CZU Lightning Complex Fire, and the 2022-2023 winter storms. 911 homes were lost in the fire, and less than ten percent have been rebuilt, which is unacceptable. Streamlining the rebuilding process is a priority of mine, as well as creating a coordinated approach to disaster response and partnering with public and private agencies to ensure that residents have the resources they need when disaster strikes;

Infrastructure: Infrastructure is another very important issue, as much of it is aging. We need to invest in projects that will have a lasting impact to ensure that residents have reliable roads, water, and connectivity. Expanding reliable broadband and cellular access for residents and small businesses is a priority in our rural community, as well as ensuring that it is available during emergencies. Additionally, we need to coordinate with public and private partners to expand safe routes to schools, pedestrian access, and sustainable, affordable transit options;

Water: It's a priority of mine to ensure that our residents have access to clean, reliable water, and it's unacceptable that some in our community are struggling with this, like customers of the Big Basin Water Company. As County Supervisor, I will help facilitate a solution, such as helping Big Basin Water become a public entity so that it can leverage federal and state relief dollars, and I will be an active participant in that process to ensure that our residents have strong voice advocating for them;

Housing: Affordable housing is incredibly important, as it is across the Central Coast, so that our community is representative of all people, not just those who can afford to live here. In the 5th District, our housing stock has been impacted by recent disasters, so we need to focus on preserving our existing housing stock by ensuring that damaged homes can be repaired or rebuilt as quickly as possible. We also need to invest in a sustainable housing ecosystem that prioritizes housing affordability and workforce and transit-oriented housing. On the issue of homelessness, we need to implement evidence-driven prevention strategies and ensure that those who are most vulnerable receive the support that they need to regain and sustain housing;

Social Justice: I have experienced firsthand what it feels like to be discriminated against, and to not have a voice; because of this, I have dedicated my career to speaking up for and acting on behalf of others who do not have a voice, and I will continue to do so as a member of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors. Representation is incredibly important to me - it's a pillar of my campaign - and I know that diverse representation in leadership and government positions can lead to more equitable policies and decisions. I will champion diversity and inclusion initiatives to ensure that the county government is an accurate representation of the population it represents, as well as work to strengthen equal opportunity employment initiatives. I will also work to advance economic equity and promote policies that address income disparities, such as expanding access to affordable housing and healthcare, especially in underserved areas of our county. I will also support diversity initiatives in the healthcare workforce, and ensure the county's health and human services are accessible and inclusive for all, including those who identify as LGBTQT+, BIPOC, non-English speakers, and immigrants. I will support criminal justice reform, including community policing, oversight and accountability of law enforcement, and diversion programs that focus on rehabilitation over incarceration. Finally, I will be a champion of environmental justice by supporting efforts

to address pollution in marginalized communities, as well as equitable access to recreation in all communities.

In 2022, voters overwhelming voted against the Greenway initiative (Measure D). However, there are still concerns about the likelihood of the rail trail being built and the environmental impacts it could cause. Please explain your position on the rail trail and public transportation in our community. *

I was a strong supporter of the No on Measure D campaign, and I continue to be a supporter of the rail trail, and public transit as a whole. Measure D would have had a negative impact on the 5th District, including local businesses like Roaring Camp. I am proud of my volunteer work on the successful No on D campaign.

Public transit plays a critical role in reducing traffic congestion, cutting emissions, and providing accessible transportation options for our community, and I am committed to finding transit solutions that reduce our dependence on cars. Sustainable transportation and responsible land use planning are essential elements of addressing congestion and environmental concerns. I will prioritize solutions that align with our goal of promoting sustainable transportation options. This includes ensuring that new developments are well-connected to public transit and encouraging alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle use.

When elected, I am committed to actively working with our state and federal partners to explore additional funding sources for public transit options, such as Santa Cruz METRO, including ParaCruz, and the Rail and Trail. This may include pursuing grants, advocating for increased funding allocations, and seeking innovative funding mechanisms to support and improve our public transit system. Investing in our public transit system and making it more accessible to all is a win-win proposition for our community. It's an essential step toward building a more sustainable and inclusive transportation infrastructure.

Housing is still among the top issues in the county. Many residents are rent-burdened and find it difficult to gain the generational wealth that previous generations have been able to build. How will you address housing issues in your district and the county overall? *

I firmly believe that we need to prioritize the development of housing near job centers, create walkable neighborhoods, and establish affordable transit options accessible to people of all income levels. This includes constructing low-income housing, workforce housing, farmworker housing and market-rate housing. It's crucial to continually increase infill density to promote a healthier housing market, maintain a diverse population, and ensure the preservation of our natural and working lands by preventing urban sprawl.

Moreover, it's imperative to support those rebuilding after disasters like the CZU fire, winter flooding, and other climate-related events. In the 5th District, our housing stock has been significantly affected, emphasizing the need to preserve existing homes by facilitating quick repairs or reconstruction. I am open to exploring various avenues to subsidize affordable housing, such as direct budget allocations, forming public-private partnerships, pursuing state and federal grants, implementing tax increases on the wealthiest members of our community, issuing bonds, and making suitable government-owned land available for affordable housing projects. It's essential to consider all options to ensure everyone in our community has access to safe and affordable housing.

How will you ensure that the County's (or City's) infrastructure (such as water, electricity, roads) are maintained equitably in your district? *

It's very important to me that county resources are distributed equitably. The 5th District frequently gets left behind; our roads and electricity are fixed more slowly than other parts of the county, and we were initially excluded from receiving COVID vaccine pop-ups during the pandemic. I want to be a voice for not just the 5th District, but the entire county, to ensure that no part of the county gets left behind. To do this, I will encourage the use of data by the Board of Supervisors to inform us about infrastructure maintenance and investments, and to analyze demographic, socioeconomic, and geographic data to identify the areas with the highest needs. I will also involve the local communities in the decision-making process by holding town hall meetings to gather input and consider community feedback when planning and implementing infrastructure projects. This will also help to ensure transparency in the decision-making process by clearly communicating to the public how infrastructure projects are selected, funded, and implemented.

What steps will you take towards having a climate resiliency and mitigation plan in place to ensure the safety of all the residents with equity in mind? *

As a supervisor, I will be dedicated to bolstering community resilience, particularly for vulnerable populations like the unhoused, undocumented workers, and seniors, in the face of pandemics, earthquakes, fires, and floods. Collaborating with local leaders and nonprofits, I propose developing inclusive disaster plans that account for language barriers, disabilities, and cultural differences. It's imperative to address underlying social and economic disparities, ensuring equitable disaster preparedness.

I will work with state legislators and do everything in my power at a local level to support critical efforts like the improvements to the San Lorenzo and Pajaro River levees and the sustainability of community organizations. Through recent disasters such as the pandemic and the winter storms, we have seen the importance of equity in health and safety infrastructure.

Prioritizing accessible health and human services, encompassing physical and mental healthcare, housing, food, and financial assistance, is essential. Additionally, investments in emergency responder training, emphasizing cultural competency, will ensure an effective and inclusive crisis response. I will use my experience leading Encompass through multiple disasters to support the local workforce in a comprehensive, equitable response to future disasters.

Please provide an example of when and how input and/or evidence has convinced you to override your initial opinion on a public policy issue? *

Very early in the campaign for a trail-only solution, later called Greenway, I was approached by local leaders who were very convincing about the “lack of viability” for an active use of the rail line in Santa Cruz County. Initially, I was intrigued by what sounded like a quick and cheap solution to activate the rail corridor, and I approached the Greenway concept with an open mind. However, I also took it upon myself to learn about the issue, and I actively searched for information about the Rail and Trail vision, plans and viability. Upon doing my own review of the facts and data, and listening to community stakeholders, I found myself firmly grounded in my position that a Rail and Trail solution is the best approach to address the future of transportation, climate action and economic vibrancy in our county, and I was a strong supporter of the No on Measure D campaign in 2022.

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